

Powder Point Bridge

(The following was written in 1888.)

POWDER POINT BRIDGE

By Ernest E. W. Brewster

As you come to the road that leads to the Point,
Turn your head to the left on its wobbly joint -
There a house you will see To (be) Let alone
If on your straight journey you still would be "gone,"
(Or mayhap the house is to go without land,
All the old wooden structures, just as they stand).

Then up hill and down as the bird makes his way,
And you come to the bridge that crosses the bay -
A long pile of bridge - and a bridge built on piles
That stretches to eastward some less than 2 miles
Quite level, and flat as a dancing-room floor,
Yet not a good surface to glide the foot o'er.
The polish has gone - it is minus the way -
Oh, crossed in a hay-cart, the thumps and the whacks!
For 'tis rig-a-gig-gig- and thumpity whack,
Till you feel all the bones in your body to crack!
For 'tis bumpity-bump, and didder-de-de,
Till your teeth rattle loose, and your eyes fail to see!

It's well the town fathers, imbued with good sense,
Had a sign printed big and nailed to the fence,
That warns reckless drivers to keep a slow speed!
Whence the worst of the shake-up is saved us, indeed.
On the south side a walk for wooers is laid-
On the north is a track for a "bach" or a maid-
On the south, side-by-side two lovers may walk-
On the north, one alone must a single plank stalk,

In the midst of the bridge we come to the draw

(Some folks who cross over mayn't know what it's for.)
But you "draw" up your horse-the draw "draws" aside-
They "draw" a boat through on the incoming tide.
You "draw" your breath easy, and gaze on the view;
And perhaps "draw" a sketch, free rendered, or true;
The smoker may "draw" a cigar from its case,
And "draw" the smoke through it, an act slightly base-
Or do what you may; on your resources "draw;"
And look for the thing that you ne'er before saw;
As waiting the while for the draw to come back
And fill up the gap you have found in your track.
But here the whole scene is so grand to behold,
To slow down our horse to a walk, we are told,
How thoughtful the town of the traveller's need,
To thus for his comfort to lay down his speed!

The bridge is crossed over - we slump in the sand -
Ah, the planks of the bridge are better than land!
For the sand is a drag, - the stones are a bore -
But oh! here we are! on Atlantic's broad shore!
The wide stretch of beach is a glistening floor,
Where the white combing breakers splash over and roar.
Now the broad, heaving ocean's goal to repay
The cart-load of "outers" who leap from the hay.

From the noise and heat of the city street
I gladly turn away
To the lovely view and the waters blue
Of grand old Plymouth Bay;
And feast my eyes on the welcome sight,
The distant towers of Gurnet Light.

When the stars they shine, in the arch divine
And the twilight deeper grows.
I can see its gleam, o'er the waters stream

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Just there where the river flows?
And I eagerly watch through the coming night
For the tender shining of Gurnet Light.

So I sit and dream as I see it's beam
Of eyes that long ago
Which have watched the ships, in their outward trips
Till the tears would overflow?
The first departure, O piteous sight
The Mayflower rounding the Gurnet Light.

How quick the start of the sailor's heart
As the vessel homeward bound
Comes in the bay, this looked for day
As he hears the well known sound
Of the seagulls cry, and hails the sight.
The snow-white towers of Gurnet Light.

Can it be true that the summer blue
Of the sky so smiling now,
Can change to gray of winter day
And hide the ground with snow?
Can the waves that dance so free and bright
Be chained with ice round the Gurnet Light?

O I love to dream, that the fields are green,
And the grass is on the hill,
For as I retreat to the city street,
I shall fancy its beauty still.
And memory treasures the charming sight
The radiant gleaming of Gurnet Light.